

according to the wish and presentiment of the poet, were to conjoin these two venerable names in endless fame?

If it he said for some parts of these dim speculations, that though Christianity comes forward as the practical dispensation of truth, yet there must be, in remote abstraction behind, some grand, ultimate, elementary truths, which this dispensation does not recognise, but even intercepts from our view by a system of less refined elements, in which doctrines of a more contracted, palpable, and popular form, of comparatively local purport and relation, are imposed in substitution for the higher and more general and abstracted truths—I answer, And what did the poet, or "the master of the poet and the song," know about those truths, and how did they come by their information.

A serious observer must acknowledge with regret, that such a class of productions as novels, in which folly has tried to please in a greater number of shapes than the poet enumerates in the *Paradise of Fools*, is capable of producing a very considerable effect on the moral taste of the community. A large proportion of them however are probably of too slight and insipid a consistence to have any more specific counteraction to Christian principles than that of mere folly in general; excepting indeed that the most flimsy of them will occasionally contribute their mite of mischief, by alluding to a Christian profession, in a manner that identifies it with the cant by which hypocrites have aped it, or the extravagance with which fanatics have inflated or distorted it. But a great and direct force of counteracting influence is emitted from those, which eloquently display characters of eminent vigour and virtue, when it is a virtue having no basis in religion; a factitious thing resulting from the mixture of dignified pride with generous feeling; or constituted of those philosophical principles which are too often accompanied, in these works, by an avowed or strongly intimated contempt of the interference of any religion, especially the Christian. If the case is mended in some of these productions into which an awkward religion has found its way, it is rather because the

that the doctrine of the * *Essay on Man* ' was received from Bolingbroke. . . . What Bolingbroke supplied could only be the first principles ; the order, illustration, and embellishments must all be Pope's."